

will urge viewers to donate to a variety of charities, including groups devoted to fighting malaria. For all you “Idol” viewers, join this battle, join the cause to help save lives. I’m not so sure I’m going to watch it tonight, but this show does have a large group of viewers, and I really appreciate the producers for joining us.

Major League Soccer is running a promotional campaign that encourages fans to make a donation to cover the cost of bed nets for a family in Africa. College students on more than 50 campuses are holding “Music to End Malaria” events to generate awareness and raise funds. The Magnum Photos agency has launched a photo narrative that depicts the devastating toll of malaria. Awareness is a part of solving the problem.

You don’t have to be a part of an organization to make a difference. In an elementary school in Parkersburg, West Virginia, 63 children raised enough money to buy 15 bed nets. This past Christmas, our family—some of our family gathered in Camp David, and my brother gave us bed nets as a Christmas gift. You can do the same thing here in America. You can make an individual contribution to save somebody’s life.

I want to tell you what this third grader explained, why he contributed to the program. He said, “I want to fight malaria because it’s helpful, and I want to help kids in Africa because it’s the right thing to do.” And it is the right thing to do. And that’s why we’re gathered here in the Rose Garden, to commit this Nation to doing the right thing and to call upon citizens in this country to do the right thing.

America is a country that gives medicine to the sick and food to the hungry and protection to the threatened because it’s the right thing to do. The Malaria Awareness Day is a chance for me to thank all Americans who have donated to this cause and urge others to do the same. It’s a day to call on nations around the world to join us in a great humanitarian effort. And it’s a day to remind our fellow citizens that when you help somebody live a life, it strengthens our soul and enhances our spirit.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to R. Timothy Ziemer, Coordinator, President’s Malaria Initiative; President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil; Representatives Donald M. Payne and Christopher H. Smith of New Jersey; Japan’s Ambassador to the U.S. Ryozi Kato; and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Financial Literacy

April 25, 2007

April is Financial Literacy Month, and so I’ve asked some of our Nation’s most caring citizens to come and to talk to us about how to develop and hone a strategy that will help more of our American citizens become financially literate. If you’re not sure how interest works, it’s hard to be a good homeowner. If you don’t understand rates of return, it’s hard to be a good investor. If you’re not sure how money works, it will be missed opportunity for people from all walks of life.

It is in this country’s interest that people in every neighborhood, from every background, understand the financial literacy world, understand what it means when people talk terms related to their money. The more financially literate our society is, the more hopeful our society becomes.

And ours is a great system. It is a system that means somebody can come to America or live in America with nothing and end up with a lot; a system where people can realize dreams and work hard and realize those dreams. But unless we have a financially literate society, not enough people are going to be able to realize the great promise of America.

And so I want to thank the Secretary of Treasury and the Secretary of Education, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for agreeing to be a part of the committee to make sure the Federal effort toward financial literacy is well coordinated with the private sector. And I thank those from the private sector for joining us. We’ve got people from corporate America; we’ve got people from faith-based America; we’ve

got people from community-based-program America. We've got people from all walks of life, all around the country, who are deeply concerned about making sure this country is as financially literate as possible, and I thank you for coming. I appreciate you joining us.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for chairing the project.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks Honoring the 2007 National and State Teachers of the Year

April 26, 2007

She forgot to add "and loves a teacher." [Laughter] I made a good move when I married a teacher, and Laura and I are honored to welcome you here to the Rose Garden. Thanks for coming, and thanks for teaching.

This is a special day for all who care deeply about education, because we fully understand that without a good teacher it's hard to achieve national goals and objectives. And so the Teacher of the Year ceremony is a chance to pay homage to some really fine public servants and great Americans, so we welcome you.

I appreciate the Secretary of Education joining us. I want to thank Congressman John Boozman and his wife, Cathy, from Arkansas. We thank Jay Inslee, from Washington, for joining us; thank you, Congressman. Dennis Moore and Stephanie, from Kansas, have joined us, as has Rick Larsen from Washington. I wonder why all these Washington Congressmen have joined us. [Laughter]

Laura and I just had a chance to thank every State Teacher of the Year. It's an honor to welcome you to the Oval Office. It is a shrine to democracy and a wonderful place to give our personal thanks to a job well done.

I do want to recognize the finalists this year: Justin Minkel from Arkansas; Josh Anderson from Kansas; Tamara Tiong from New Mexico; Andrea Peterson, the Teacher of the Year. And we've got to recognize Joel, the husband of the Teacher of the Year. Thank you, Joel. [Laughter] And mom and

dad—I'm going to say something about mom and dad in a minute.

I want to thank Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, for sponsoring this event. Rhonda Mims, the president of ING Foundation, Tom Waldron, the executive vice president of ING, and all the chief state school officers here today, thanks for coming. Thanks for honoring the teachers.

When you really think about it, few professionals have as direct an impact on our future as our teachers. Teachers are among our children's first role models, counselors, and friends. Teachers awaken young minds, and teachers encourage ingenuity and unleash fertile imaginations.

It's demanding work to be a teacher, even during its best moments. Sometimes, teachers come across students who require them to summon every last ounce of patience and understanding. When those times come, I just ask you remember, one day that student may become the President. [Laughter]

We ask a lot of our teachers, and we owe them a lot in return. One of the first priorities as President was to work with members of both parties to pass what's called the No Child Left Behind Act. I am—I can't tell you how important this Act is to make sure every child learns to read, write, and add and subtract. The Act insists upon high standards, standards that you all set in your classrooms. Otherwise, you wouldn't be a Teacher of the Year. It says that it's important to measure to determine whether or not our children are learning and meeting standards. Measurement is not a tool to punish; measurement is a tool to correct and reward.

The No Child Left Behind Act is working. In reading, 9-year-olds have made more progress in 5 years than the previous 28 years combined. A President couldn't report that to the Nation unless we actually measured to determine whether that was true. In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds have earned their highest test scores ever. In both reading and math, African American and Hispanic students are scoring higher and beginning to close the achievement gap with their peers.

The structure of the No Child Left Behind Act, the strategy of the Act makes a lot of sense. And that's why the Congress needs to